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Senate

THE JOURNAL

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the Journal of the proceedings of Monday, April 19, 1971, be dispensed with.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, unless the acting minority leader has something to say, I should like to be recognized at an appropriate time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Does the majority leader seek recognition under the standing order, or does the Senator from Montana wish to be recognized under the order of yesterday?

Mr. MANSFIELD. Under the order of yesterday.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Chair thanks the Senator.

"FRAGGING" IN VIETNAM

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, 1 week ago yesterday, a young constituent of my distinguished colleague (Mr. METCALF) and myself, an Army first lieutenant, was to have ended his tour of duty in Vietnam. He was a West Point graduate, an honor student in high school, a National Merit Scholarship semifinalist, president of his student council and of his CYO chapter, and a three-sport letterman. He graduated from the Military Academy near the top of his class, served on the honor committee, and, following graduation, completed a course in Ranger training. In every respect, this young Montanan had every right and every reason to live. Like many other young men today, he volunteered for service in Southeast Asia to carry on a war, not of his making or choice, but prosecuted pursuant to policies formed and implemented here in Washington.

On March 15, just 4 weeks before his tour was to end, this young Montanan was killed. He was not a victim of combat. He was not a casualty of a helicopter crash or a jeep accident. In the early morning hours of March 15, the first lieutenant from Montana was "fragged" to death as he lay sleeping in his billet at Bien Hoa. He was murdered by a fellow serviceman, an American GI. "Fragging" so I have been advised by the Secretary of the Army, refers to the use of a fragmentation grenade in other

than a combat situation by one person against another to kill or do bodily harm. While I carry on my person at all times the death and casualty figures arising out of this tragic war, none reflect expressly the killing and maiming that are caused by "fragging"—by the act of one American serviceman, who, for whatever reason, unleashes a grenade against a fellow American serviceman. It is a grim statistic of this war that I shall not lose sight of.

The questions that arise from such actions are profound, indeed. What failure of order within our Armed Forces, may I ask first of all, has produced the kind of atmosphere that resulted last year alone in 209 "fraggings"—murders of one GI by another with weapons that are supposed to be used only against the Vietnamese enemy? Even more important: What has caused this rather widespread and total disregard for human life and limb among our American soldiers? And what can be done about it? Surely, a soldier's access to weapons can be curtailed while he is not in a combat area. That such is necessary is an unfortunate side effect of this war. The Army has found this alternative necessary. It is being practiced now in Vietnam. But even confiscation of a soldier's weapons when not in combat does not reach the real problem. The atmosphere that drives an American GI to kill his fellow GI or superior is the real problem. I feel deeply, however, that the only solution is the total dissolution of our involvement in Indochina. "Fragging", I fear is just another outgrowth of this mistaken and tragic conflict.

Right now, my thoughts and deepest sympathy go out to a young widow and to a family back in Montana. Nothing can rectify their loss, or the Nation's. How inadequate it is to say we hope his assassin is apprehended, convicted, and receives just punishment for this craven act of violence. I have great faith in the system of military justice, but justice is very little compensation to the loved ones he leaves behind.

Mr. President, I am in receipt of a letter from the mother of this young Montanan in which she, in part, has the following to say:

The reason for this letter is to ask your help in working for a volunteer army. Several weeks ago, he (her son) told me he did not think anyone should be forced to serve

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in our armed forces; and if what we read in the paper is true, I will have to agree with him.

I, too, agree with that sentiment. I think I should say that I am a cosponsor of the bill which seeks to create a volunteer army, based on the recommendations of the Gates Commission and the President. In that respect I have joined with Senator HATFIELD and other Senators, including the distinguished Senator from Arizona (Mr. GOLDWATER), to try to achieve this end.

I also received a copy of a letter which her son had written to her. It is a most eloquent letter but I shall not read it to the Senate because I consider it as confidential. Her closing sentence contains the expression, "May God have mercy." I can think of no better expression at this time; nor one more appropriate to this entire matter.

Mr. METCALF. Mr. President, will the Senator yield?

Mr. MANSFIELD. I yield.

Mr. METCALF. I thank the majority leader for yielding.

This young Montanan, this soldier, was one of my nominees to West Point. Looking back over the file, he was anxious to serve his country. Some of the phrases from his letter of application to be appointed to West Point are most eloquent indicating that he desired to be a career soldier for the United States of America.

In addition to the achievements that the majority leader has outlined, this man was active in church activities. He was president of his church group. All during the time he was in high school, he was a class officer, and he finished his career in high school as president of the student body. He was popular among his classmates. When he went to West Point, he again attained popularity among his classmates. Here was a young man of outstanding ability, and at the same time an ability to get along with people.

He was a talented musician, a boy who, had he been permitted to come back to Montana on April 12, would have achieved an eminent career and would have been an outstanding citizen of this country.

Yet, in a senseless and insane moment, he was killed by a haphazard and random demonstration of an enlisted man who threw a hand grenade into an officers' barracks. I am certain, from going over the record and over his attainments and his achievements as an officer, that the hand grenade was not directed at this young man. It was just an insane and senseless gesture on the part of some young enlisted man who resented the activities of the officers who were in his command. This young Montanan was an outstanding officer, one of the finest officers of his grade and rank in the Army.

I concur with my eminent colleague from Montana that the death of this boy is attributable to all of us. This insane and senseless action of one soldier in Vietnam is just a part of an insane and senseless war that should be brought to an end immediately. It is a cancer that is growing in the heart of America, and activities such as 209 fraggings are only symptoms of what is going to continue

if we do not get out of our involvement in Southeast Asia.

My heart goes out to the parents and to the wife of this very talented and able young man. We in the United States have lost the abilities of a fine, patriotic boy, but we are losing more than that in continuing this crazy action in Vietnam. We are losing the confidence of the American people. We are going to have a continuation of the involvement of these symptoms of senseless activity because we are perpetuating and continuing a senseless war.

So, all I can say to the family of this fine boy is that they have my heartfelt sympathy. He died just as surely for his country had he died in a helicopter crash or receiving gunfire from the Vietcong.

I say to my colleagues in the Senate: Let this be the beginning of the end of our involvement in Southeast Asia so that these things will not occur again.

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, I thank my distinguished colleague. I join wholeheartedly in his sentiments.

Mr. MATHIAS. Mr. President, will the distinguished majority leader yield?

Mr. MANSFIELD. I am happy to yield to the Senator from Maryland.

Mr. MATHIAS. I thank the distinguished majority leader for yielding. I take these few moments to join him and his colleague, Mr. METCALF, in expressing my very deep, personal sympathy to the family of this young officer who has died so tragically, and also to the families of all the other servicemen who have died in similar incidents in Vietnam—all too many of them.

Mr. President, I would suggest that today the distinguished majority leader has, in a sense, made history because, for the first time to my knowledge, he has surfaced the word "fragging" on the Senate floor.

In every war a new vocabulary springs up. They are often words that are happy, words that are fun. I remember during World War II that "qidunk" became the word for ice cream and "gizmo" became the universal word for any kind of new gadget we did not quite understand. But in all the lexicon of war there has never been a more tragic word than "fragging."

I asked one of the judges on the Court of Military Appeals recently if he knew what "fragging" meant, and he said that he did not, and so I told him that it was "to kill or injure a military superior by the use of a fragmentation grenade." He said, "No, I did not know the word, but unhappily we all know about the act because these cases are coming through the military court system in great numbers."

In all the lexicon of war there is not a more tragic word than "fragging" with all that it implies of total failure of discipline and the depression of morale, the complete sense of frustration and confusion, and the loss of goals and hope itself. I join the distinguished majority leader in his resolve and determination to see this evil, and all the other evils that blight the spirit of man that have sprung from the miasmic swamps and bogs of Vietnam, be terminated with an end to this tragic war.

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished acting minority

leader. So many things have arisen out of Vietnam that bode ill for the American people and have from the very beginning—"fragging," corruption, drugs, disease, casualties—now well beyond the 350,000 mark; not to mention the loss of treasure, which could be better spent in facing up to the problems of our people at home.

An ill-starred adventure if ever there has been one—a most tragic and mistaken war. So many good, young men losing their lives, lives which could have been a credit to their Nation for years and decades to come, lives which we can ill afford to lose, and capabilities and careers which would have done much to help map out the future of this country and help it to continue to be the great Nation it should be and will be—God willing—with the passage of time.

Mr. HUGHES. Mr. President, will the distinguished majority leader yield?

Mr. MANSFIELD. I am happy to yield to the Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HUGHES. I want to commend the distinguished majority leader on his statement. If I heard correctly, he said that in the past year, according to the Pentagon, there have been 209 of these incidents.

Mr. MANSFIELD. 209, for calendar year, 1970.

Mr. HUGHES. And those that are recorded, I would presume, are basically domiciliary type incidents, rather than on the battlefield.

Mr. MANSFIELD. That is right.

Mr. HUGHES. So, in effect, we have no real knowledge, probably, of what the total number of these so-called incidents of assassination might be, if they did take place in battle?

Mr. MANSFIELD. The Senator is correct.